



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 153

July 2019

Welcome!

It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing at the beginning of last month of long time branch member and supporter Gordon Baker. Gordon was one of those that attended our first meeting and subsequently over the years frequently made the effort to make the trip from his home at Twynning to join us. He was also, from its inception, a great supporter of our War Graves Project and we shall certainly miss that involvement and commitment from him. On behalf of everyone involved with the branch we send our most heartfelt sympathies and condolences to all his close friends and family. Should anyone wish to attend, his funeral will be held on Friday 12 July at 12.30 p.m. at the Cheltenham Crematorium, Oak Chapel.

Andy Hinks is organising another trip to the Machine Gun Collection (Vickers) at Swindon later in the year. A new facility to house the collection has been built and they have a licence to give blank firing demonstrations. The cost will probably be £10 per head and we would look for

a group of a dozen. If you are interested, please contact Andy at speakers@cgwfa.org.uk.

The CWGC has announced a new volunteering scheme *Eyes On, Hands On*. It is aimed at raising awareness of the many war graves that lie in small cemeteries and churchyards throughout the UK, and encouraging individuals to monitor their condition, giving feedback to the CWGC on any repair work required and undertaking minor cleaning and weeding, where appropriate. The scheme is being introduced in various regions over a period of time. The branch has, of course, been operating something similar for WW1 graves, by way of its Gloucestershire War Graves Project, for over ten years. It would be nice to think that the feedback provided by those who assist with the branch's project has given the CWGC this idea. For more information on how to sign up to the scheme, please visit: www.cwgc.org/learn/news-and-events/projects/eyes-on-hands-on.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 13 August

Sir William Robertson: Architect of Victory?

Ross Beadle

National Star College at 7.30pm

Tuesday, 10 September

*Sex and Morale in the British Army
on the Western Front 1914-1918*

Dr Bruce Cherry

National Star College at 7.30pm

Haig gets all the attention, but he was only half of the double act that set British war plans from December 1915 to February 1918, all the way through the Somme and Passchendaele battles. The other half of the act was Sir



William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff and famously the only man ever to rise from the lowest rank all the way to Field Marshal. This talk explores his role in setting the BEF's ultimately victorious strategy and the accusations made against him of duplicity towards the Government.

There has been a collective amnesia when it comes to recalling the sexual activities of the British soldier on the Western Front between 1914 and 1918. Perhaps there has even been a conspiracy of silence with some inclined to let sleeping dogs lie. That the soldier could find the time, inclination, and indeed partners to enjoy a sex life amidst the mud and carnage is often a revelation even to those who are Western Front experts.

Noting that it 'takes two to tango', Bruce looks at the socio-demographics and motives of the women involved and the workings and economics of the 'Red Lamp' army-regulated brothels. Careful not to denigrate the memory of the men who served and died, and avoiding sensationalism, hyperbole, or tabloid-style copy, Bruce paints a vivid picture of the seedier aspects of life behind the front while arguing its positive impact on morale.

Private Valentine Arthur Bayliss Carter (10806)

2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards

Arthur Carter was born in Painswick, Gloucestershire in June 1886, to Ashton John Carter, a stone mason, and his wife Elizabeth. By his early teens he had ceased use of the name Valentine and was known by his second name, Arthur.

After working for a period as a gardener, at eighteen he enlisted into the Grenadier Guards as a regular soldier for the minimum term of three years, leaving in 1906 to serve in Gloucestershire Constabulary, stationed at Cirencester, Winchcombe and Cheltenham. In 1912 Arthur married Annie Hagell of Middlesex and they had two children, Edwin and Kitchener.

Arthur was still on the Army Reserve and on the outbreak of war was recalled to the 3rd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, landing in France in November 1914 with a reinforcement draft for the 2nd Battalion. In 1915 the battalion was in action during The Battle of Aubers and then in August 1915 it transferred to the newly formed 1st Guards Brigade with which it took part in the Battle of Loos.

On 3 October the battalion moved forward in support of the Coldstream Guards, taking over a section of the old British front line just south of the Hohenzollern Redoubt. Five days later the battalion captured a section of enemy trench in front of the redoubt, which was then subjected to repeated counter-attacks as the Germans tried to regain it. On 12 October, following a morning of intense shelling, what is described in the War Diary as 'a severe bombing attack' was launched on the trenches held by No 4 Company,



of which Arthur was a member. Their main concern was whether their supply of Mills bombs would hold out, but they did and two enemy bomb stores were hit causing large explosions. The battalion threw nearly two thousand grenades during the battle and the Germans a similar number. The battalion War Diary records, 'No 4 Company bombers did very good work, their Mills bombs outranging those of the enemy' and by nightfall the German attacks faded away.

Arthur was killed by a German hand grenade during the repulse of the main German attack, being one of seventeen killed and sixty-one wounded. Another Gloucestershire police officer, Private Albert Hull, was serving alongside Arthur and was wounded at the same time he was killed. Arthur is commemorated on Loos Memorial to the Missing.

Bob Brunson



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"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."